

Prayer Meeting

"GOD OUR STRENGTH."

Week Beginning May 23.

Psalm 43.

It was a time of sore distress to David. The greater portion of once loyal subjects had now joined the conspiracy of Absalom and Ahithophel against their king. "There came a messenger to David saying, 'The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom. And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, 'Arise and let us flee.' David, however, was not dismayed. His hopes seemed to rise to higher levels. His confidence in the justice of his cause prompted him to appeal to Him who weighs the thoughts and tries the hearts of men. 'Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation.' The crisis now was very great, so he pleads earnestly for guidance. 'O, send out thy light and thy truth, let them lead me.' While conscious of the justice of his cause, he is deeply impressed with the need of gracious counsel and sustenance: as in other instances he feels a deep longing for the comforts of the sanctuary. 'I will go unto the altar of God.' 'Upon the harp will I praise thee.' Under conditions like these he realized how precious was the favor and person of his God. He calls him 'my exceeding joy.' He then remonstrates with his soul for yielding to dejection, 'Why art thou cast down, O, my soul?'"

Let us be instructed from this Psalm, that under circumstance of special trial our recourse is to fervent and effectual prayer. God is our refuge and strength. He will help us "and that right early."

Let us become familiar with the truth also, that the trials of God's people are not always the effect of their own transgression or folly. David had been eminently faithful and successful in promoting the interests of the Kingdom. But the very wisdom and devotion of his reign had brought the Kingdom to such a condition as that the treacherous ingrate, Absalom, coveted its possession; and promises of reward tempted David's trusted counselor, Ahithophel, to join in the conspiracy. It has always been so. Enemies have persecuted the saints without cause. The most eminent servants of God have had their secret detractors or their open assailants. The most eminent service does not exempt from treachery, or other forms of injury at the hands of those who hate truth and light. Our Master said, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake." "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake."

We will utterly fail of the blessing which God has for us in such sore trials if we do not resort to Him with all the more earnest pleading and with increased confidence. In his temporal estate David was in extreme distress and peril, but in his spiritual life he now attained a high and indeed rapturous vantage-ground. Despite the earthly darkness he could speak of his God as "the gladness of my joy." So it may be and should be with every believer who has special burdens or distress. As earth's lights grow dim, or rather as the darkness deepens, the light of heaven should shine more radiantly in our souls. And as we are impressed with the illusion of earthly favor we should prize more highly the faithfulness of God to all who make Him their refuge and strength.

Better methods may simplify the social question, it can be solved by nothing less than better men—Francis Greenwood Peabody.

Never esteem anything as of advantage to thee that shall make thee break thy word or lose thy self-respect.—Marcus Aurelius.

Young People's Society

HOME MISSION HEROES.

Topic for Sunday, May 30: Heroes of Home Missions. Matthew 10: 7-16.

DAILY READINGS.

Monday: Righteous Lot. 2 Peter 2:6-9.

Tuesday: Courageous Nathan. 2 Samuel 12:1-7.

Wednesday: John the Baptist. John 1:15-28.

Thursday: Jesus. John 1: 9-13; Matthew 15: 21-28.

Friday: Peter. Galatians 2:7-9.

Saturday: A daughter of Jacob. John 4:25-42.

They are all heroes. It is wrong to discriminate between one and another. It takes heroism for a man to go into home mission work.

It ought not to be so, but it is. The unthinking mass in the church allows itself to regard the man who takes such a field as in some way a second or third rate man.

It will glorify a foreign missionary, who is really a fourth-rate man, just because he has gone abroad, and will take care of him and relieve him of all anxiety as to his helpless ones.

Praise and honor are due to the man who separates himself from home and friends and country, for Christ's sake. He should be honored and provided for and care should be taken off his heart.

But equally should the home worker be regarded as a hero, who for the sake of the crying needs close at hand, risks his good name and sacrifices his ambition and the comfort of his loved ones to go into some poor field at home.

Faithfulness, not place, makes the hero. The quality is not measured by miles or seas or nationalities. As between home and foreign missionaries it is a case of "This ye ought to have done, and not to leave the other undone." Honor should be given to all the faithful.

All praise to the men who are trying to lift up the cause of home missions to its proper place, to at least the level of the heart and appreciation of the church. Robert B. Glenn's act, in passing from the governor's chair in North Carolina to a year of work pleading for home missions, is glorious.

That the line of demarcation between home and foreign missions is a difficult one to draw, and is at times unjustly drawn, may be seen from the fact that scores of those whom we call home missionaries are at work among Indians, Mexicans, Bohemians, Hungarians, French, and Italians.

Our church had at the last published report 165 home missionaries on the list of the General Assembly's committee. These are exclusive of many appointed and sustained in whole or in part by local Presbyteries or Synods, as notably in Virginia, the Carolinas, Tennessee, and other older parts of the church.

Of these 165 "heroes," 4 are women, teaching in the mission schools among the Indians; 9 are classified as "mountain missionaries"; 18 are evangelists; 14 are engaged in Indian work; 11 are at work among foreigners in our own land, chiefly among the Mexicans in Texas, and 113 are working on the "sustentation" provision for feeble churches, or non-supporting fields.

The distribution of Synods is, Georgia, 1; Kentucky, 2; Tennessee, 2; North Carolina, 3; Louisiana, 3; Virginia, 4; Florida, 14; Arkansas, 19; Oklahoma, 36; Texas, 81. The Kentucky, North Carolina and Virginia workers in the list are in the mountain field. A large proportion of the Oklahoma contingent is composed of workers in Indian missions and schools. The great and needy home mission Synods of our church are Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas.